

PECULIARITIES OF PEDAGOGUES' VOCATIONAL DIFFICULTIES: LINKS WITH LOCUS OF CONTROL, PASSION FOR TEACHING AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

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Abstract

Researches of different countries confirm that emotional and intellectual overload is typical in pedagogues' work. Lots of works are published about peculiarities in manifestation of burn-out syndrome among pedagogues. However, most of these researches analyse negative consequences of pedagogues' work. Analysis of reasons that cause it is insufficient. We still miss researches, helping to evaluate typical difficulties of pedagogical activity and revealing their perception among pedagogues themselves. It is important to define, which psychological properties of pedagogues and what socio-demographic factors make impact on subjective evaluation of one's own work related difficulties.

This article introduces to research results about pedagogues (n = 57) of two Lithuanian cities. In the process of the research empiric evaluation of peculiarities in vocational activity of pedagogues and their links to locus of control, passion for teaching and socio-demographic factors was given.

KEYWORDS: pedagogues' vocational difficulties, locus of control, passion for teaching.

Introduction

Pedagogue's profession is distinctive both due to its unique social mission and specific experience of those involved in it. On the one part, pedagogues are provided with exceptional opportunity to experience satisfaction with their own work, as thanks to their vocational competences and endeavour young generation starts forming, abilities of learners are revealed and changes take place in society. On the other part, particularity of pedagogues' activity is predetermined by specific difficulties of their work. Some of them treat these difficulties as an additional psychological load, causing unpleasant and exhaustive experience, finally leading to disappointment in vocational choice. To the contrary, others accept them as a natural and inevitable part of vocational activity, stimulating willingness to be innovative, to continuously develop and search for creative decisions.

Undoubtedly, fixation and naming of vocational activity related difficulties, disclosure of their interrelations remains to be a topical theoretical and practical problem. Researches of universal, typical and/or specific historical period and regional subculture assist in its solution. Important are researches in this trend, since they help to define and specify objective social, economic and cultural circumstances, onerous to pedagogical activities. It is also important to evaluate how emerging difficulties of vocational activity depend on their own individual psychological properties.

Researches of different countries show that emotional and intellectual overload is typical to pedagogues' work. Burnout and decreasing commitment have been regarded as major problems in teaching (Yariv, 2011). Many authors mention B.A. Farber (1991), who estimated the fact that between 5% and 20% of all U.S. teachers experience burnout at any given time. Compared to other human service related occupations (e.g., nurses, physicians, correctional officers and social workers) teachers show significantly higher levels of vocational burnout (Schaufeli et al., 1994).

Some authors argue that cognitive and emotional workload of teachers can possibly evoke chronic stress, over-fatigue and result in burnout, which may lead to psychosomatic disorders and complaints as well as restrictions in pedagogical performance. In occupational health psychology literature negative aspects of teaching and education professions are dominant (Hakanen et al., 2006).

Pedagogue's profession is notably socio - contextual. Attitude of pedagogues towards it depends on what relations are established between them and specific communities, children of which they have to educate (Pietarinen et al., 2013).

General social approach to their profession makes great impact on self-image of pedagogues. Unfavourable social appreciation of this profession and its prestige provokes a pessimistic disposition towards emerging vocational difficulties and increases the risk of negative experience. Very often values of older pedagogues do not coincide with expectations of young people. In turn, that becomes a reason for disappointment in profession and passive reaction towards emerging vocational problems and difficulties among a certain part of pedagogues (Grincevičienė. 2002; Pruskus, 2009).

Many researchers note that understanding of vocational difficulties, their subjective experience and selection of strategies response to them depend on psychological properties of pedagogues themselves (Kavaliauskienė, 2001; Vallerand et al., 2008).

According to J. Rotter, two types of humans exist: some of them link their own behaviour (actions), their reasons and consequences to own personal properties; others relate them to fatal external factors. These psychological orientations are called *locus of control*. Many investigations state that positive relationship with low-perceived vocational stress and high performance has locus of control. Individuals with internal locus of control seem to better adapt to varying situations in a more functional way than those with external locus of control (Bagdonas & Pociūtė, 1988; Mahajan & Kaur, 2012). Some explorations show that pedagogues with strong belief in internal control are more confident and are active searchers for information, assisting them in achievement of their professional goals (Gan et al., 2007; Mahajan & Kaur, 2012).

R. J. Vallerand treats passion for teaching as an important psychological characteristic of efficiency in pedagogues' vocational activity. He defines passion as „a strong inclination or desire toward an activity (e.g., one's job) that one likes (or even loves) and finds important and in which one invests time and energy“ (Vallerand et al., 2008, p. 977). Author distinguishes two types of passion: harmonious and obsessive passion.

Pedagogues with harmonious passion for teaching treat their own work as an entirety with personal significance, staying in harmony with other aspects of their life. They make no attempts to avoid emerging difficulties, treating them as a natural challenge and phenomenon, which is possible to control. Individuals with characteristic obsessive passion for teaching constantly experience discomfort in their activities. They seem to be unable to control their own activity. To the contrary, activity continuously „drives them into a corner“, shades other things and prevents from being oneself. R. J. Vallerand characterizes psycho-emotional state of these pedagogues in the following way: „because the professional activity becomes out of one's control, it can take up disproportionate space in a person's life“ (Vallerand et al., 2008, p. 978).

According to R. J. Vallerand, devotion to profession is not always a positive phenomenon. When following passion for work conception it is very important to consider pedagogu's ability to combine his work with other, particularly recreation and self-improvement related interests. In a way, it is better when he is free to choose any other acceptable beguilement after work, to join family activities, etc. If even during his leisure time pedagogues are forced to think about their work, infirmatory conflict between their vocational activity and personal life becomes inevitable. It negatively affects psychophysical potential, induces emotional and intellectual overload, which finally takes a toll on their vocational competences.

Research methodology

The aim of research is to identify peculiarities in vocational difficulties of pedagogues, to evaluate their links to locus of control, passion for teaching and socio-demographic factors.

Object of the research – peculiarities of pedagogues' vocational difficulties and their links to locus of control, passion for teaching and socio-demographic factors.

Participants

57 pedagogues with higher education, representing two Lithuanian cities, took part in the research. 36 of them (52, 6%) represented Klaipėda (population – over 160 000) and 21 high schools, 13 comprehensive schools and over 20 preschool education institutions. 21 (47,4%) pedagogues represented Rietavas, a small town (population – 3800) with two high schools and one preschool education institution.

24 respondents were kindergarteners. 4 of them were kindergarteners-methodologists, 11 – senior kindergarteners and 9 were kindergarteners. 33 respondents were teachers. 18 of them were methodologists, 11 – senior teachers and 4 of them – teachers (qualification category).

The respondents aged between 29 and 61 years old ($M=47,68$; $SD=8,56$) with a range of between 5 and 42 years of teaching experience ($M=23,47$; $SD=10$). Record of service in last workplace was varying from 5 to 36 years ($M=17,75$; $SD=9,32$). 71,92 % of them were married, 14,03 % - divorced 13, 78 % - single.

Participating in the inquiry were those pedagogues, who agreed to voluntarily interact with researchers and perform their assignments after introduction to aims and objectives of the research. Therefore, sample of this research is treated as a practical non-random one.

Measures

1. Half-structured interview. It was designed by authors for fixation of difficulties, which pedagogues come across with at the beginning of their career, continuously and in last 2 -3 years. Another group of inquiry questions aims at finding out what helps respondents to overcome difficulties, identify motives for choice of profession and disappointment with pedagogue's profession. The interview (inquiry) was organized in two stages. On the basis of literature and its analysis most frequently mentioned (by different authors) factors, impeding pedagogical activity, were identified in the first stage. In the second stage 3 experts with over 20 years of pedagogical experience and authors of the research sampled factors that are usually treated by pedagogues as difficulties of vocational activity. On the basis of that major questions of inquiry were shaped.

Uniform instruction, identical wording of questions and order of their presentation were employed in the interview (inquiry). Additional questions were introduced for specification of respondent's view only.

2. Demographic questionnaire. It consisted of 12 questions about the age of respondents, their education and professional experience, leisure time hobbies and time that they spend for them, about evaluation of personal health.

3. Internality-Externality Scale /E-I Scale/. Locus of control among respondents was measured by E-I Scale, which was developed in the laboratory of Specialized Psychology at Vilnius University. This scale consists of 30 propositions, to which respondents have to react by choosing one question out of six: too right; right; almost right; almost no; no; surely no. They gain numerical values from 1 to 6 points. A maximal number of presumptive points (180) correspond to strong internal locus of control – a firm belief that life events depend on people themselves. A minimal number of presumptive points (30) correspond to external locus of control – a firm belief that his/her life, actions and decisions are controlled by environmental factors. By employing this methodology respondents are evaluated by one single index – a value, pointing to their position within internal-external continuity. The higher is evaluation of respondents, the more their internal character is expressed.

4. The Passion Scale - adapted for teaching (Vallerand et al., 2008), Lithuanian version is designed by authors of the research. The scale was translated into Lithuanian after receipt of permission of prof. R. J. Vallerand. It is designed for evaluation of motivation in vocational activity of pedagogues. The Scale consists of 16 propositions. Responses to all items were evaluated on Likert scale and ranged from 1 (do not agree at all) to 7 (very strongly agree).

The Passion Scale – adapted for teaching and evaluates variables, like Harmonious Passion and Obsessive Passion for Teaching.

Data of the Scale are processed by employing two indexes. Index of Harmonious Passion shows whether a person is satisfied with pedagogical activity, whether or not he can realize his abilities. Index of Obsessive Passion reflects the level of emotional discomfort, caused by work related difficulties. Statistic comparison of these indexes enables to identify the type of dominant passion for pedagogical activity among individual respondents and their groups. If the index of Harmonious Passion is higher than the index of Obsessive Passion, it is stated that harmonious passion for work is typical to individual. Accordingly, it is vice versa, if above indexes exchange seats.

Research procedure

The research was individual, i. e. contacting with each respondent in due time. After instruction, securing confidentiality a 45-60 min. interview was taking place. Received answers were recorded by researchers. After it respondents were filling a demographic questionnaire was followed by their introduction to above Scales.

Statistic data processing methods

For statistical analysis was used SPSS 14.0 software package. Descriptive statistics and non-parameter statistic criteria were employed in processing of research data. They were Spearman's rho correlation coefficient, rank correlation coefficient Kendall's tau (τ)-c, Mann-Whitney U test.

Results

As work experience of all respondents was 5 or even more years, three cross-sections in evaluation of vocational difficulties were recorded during the interview: a). momentous difficulties, experienced at the beginning of academic activity; b) difficulties that were showing themselves continuously; c) difficulties that respondents were coming across with in last 2- 3 years.

17, 5% (10 of 57) of respondents stressed that at the beginning of career they were optimistic about their own abilities and readiness, adding that they could not remember serious difficulties during their very first year. 50 % of all respondents (29 of 57) maintained that shortage of practical skills was a momentous difficulty, which they had to experience. It is confirmed by following propositions, recorded during the interview: „...had no idea how to work...“, „...did not know what to start with...“, „...was constantly looking for someone to consult...“, „...knowledge, acquired during studies was insufficient...“, etc. 28 % of respondents (16 of 57) characterized learners' discipline related problems as momentous difficulties at the beginning of their career. They maintained that „... it was difficult to make the class to keep silence...“, „... sometimes it looked like it was impossible to control those children...“, „...you are coming and waiting for a storm...“ etc.

26 % (15 of 57) of respondents remembered that at the beginning of pedagogical career it was difficult to communicate with learners' parents. Typical are following answers: „... had no idea how to communicate with parents...“, „...it was hard to find proper words for parents...“, „...parents could tell more about children than I...“, „...hardest thing to do was to characterize children to their parents...“, etc.

Following difficulties, experienced at the beginning of career, were also mentioned: abundance of documentation („...did not know how to make plans...“, „... it was hard to write different reports...“, „... I spent most of time for arrangement of papers...“, etc.); complicated relations with senior colleagues and/or administration („...fear of administration because of continuous inspection...“, „...it used to be embarrassing, when senior colleagues would give remarks...“, etc.); a large number of children in classes and groups („...it was particularly difficult to cope with large classes...“, „...was waiting for the day, when the number of children in the group would decrease...“, etc.).

Respondents were also asked to indicate, which difficulties in entire process of their pedagogical career were permanent. According to some of them (15%), there are no permanent difficulties, as they are dependent on changes that take place in society.

Naturally, approach of teachers and preschool educators to permanent difficulties in vocational activity was different. More than half of teachers (54 %) maintained that lack of motivation and willingness for learning among their pupils was to be treated as a permanent difficulty. Some teachers (20 %) attached learners' discipline related problems to permanent difficulties. These difficulties were not mentioned by pedagogues of preschool education. However, a large number of difficulties, characterized by teachers and preschool educators as permanent, basically worked in. Lack of cooperation with learners' parents was named as a permanent difficulty by many educators (45%). Lack of this cooperation was also mentioned by 60% of teachers. Therefore, cracks in cooperation with learners' parents by most of respondents were related to permanent difficulties in vocational activity. Different aspects of psycho-emotional self-regulation (duty to be responsible for learners, necessity to control own emotions, keep patience and tolerance, etc.) were also related to permanent difficulties.

When naming difficulties, experienced in last 2 - 3 years, respondents were mostly mentioning (29 cases out of 57) those of psycho-emotional character. This tendency showed up, because pedagogues were focusing on specific recent unpleasant incidents. Following propositions of respondents were recorded: „...it becomes hard to work, since I worry about every single trifle...“; „... can not calm down yet after what happened during the event...“; „... running out of steam so that I can't fall asleep...“; „... it is difficult to please children, when you feel tired...“; „...it hurts, when children are indifferent to your endeavours...“; „...deeply concerned, as it is difficult to contact young people...“, „...if you are strict, both children and their parents resent it...“, „...constant noise is weary...“, „... it is very difficult to understand each child...“, etc.

Second in frequency of occurrence among teachers was lack of schoolchildren's motivation (12 cases), whereas among preschool educators it was a heavy workload (9 cases) and abundance of documentation (8 cases). Second in frequency of occurrence for entire sample (14 cases) was lack of cooperation with learners' parents, indifference to their own children and disregard of pedagogues' remarks.

More rare (from 5 to 1 cases) were mentioned following difficulties: unpaid overtime, integration of children with specific demands, small salary, increase of children behavioural disorders, risk of drug addiction and other subjections, conflicts with colleagues and administration, etc.

57 respondents 134 times mentioned various difficulties of vocational activity, with which they came across in last 2 – 3 years. Not a single disturbing difficulty was mentioned by 8 respondents, 9 of them underlined only 1, 11 – only 2, 19 respondents mentioned 3, 7 respondents – 4, 3 respondents – 6 difficulties. Therefore, subjective approach of respondents to the number and character of difficulties in their vocational activity was rather different.

The research also set a task to find out, whether or not self-reception of experienced difficulties in pedagogical activity is related to peculiarities in locus of control.

To identify and specify these links we distributed above difficulties of last 2-3 years into two categories: perceived institutional difficulties and perceived psycho-emotional difficulties. Organizational and administrative difficulties, subject related complications in relations with administration, colleagues, learners and their parents we attached to the category of Perceived Institutional Difficulties. Negative experience, subjectively entitled by respondents as difficulties of their vocational activity, was attached to the category of Perceived Psycho-emotional Difficulties. Total index, entitled as All Perceived Professional Difficulties, was also employed in statistic analysis. Its numerical value is an arithmetic sum of all difficulties, underlined by each respondent.

With the help of employed Internality - Externality Scale locus of control index I-E, oriented towards internality, was recorded: the higher is respondent's evaluation, the more expressed is his internality.

To identify links between experienced difficulties and evaluations for locus of control, the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient /rho/ was employed.

Received were statistically significant correlations between a number of experienced psycho-emotional difficulties and their internality - „tendency to expect reinforcements to be the consequences of their own efforts or behaviour“ (Colman, 2001, p.415). Statistically significant link between perceived institutional difficulties and internality was not found. However, a statistically significant correlation with total index, reflecting all perceived vocational difficulties, was also traced (see Table 1).

Table 1. Correlations between perceived vocational difficulties and locus of control

Variables	Perceived Institutional Difficulties	Perceived Psycho-emotional Difficulties	All Perceived Difficulties
I-E Locus of Control	rho= 0,141	rho=0,310	rho = 0,296
	p= 0,294	p= 0,019	p= 0,025

These results enable to maintain that pedagogues with internal locus of control come across with a larger number of vocational difficulties than those with external one. They also enable to maintain that pedagogues, who think that above problems emerge due to themselves rather than to objective circumstances, come across with a larger number of psycho-emotional difficulties in vocational activity. Second statistically significant correlation shows that the more higher is the level of internality among pedagogues, the more higher is their leaning towards emphasis of their own vocational difficulties.

The fact that individuals with expressed internal orientation are more considerate towards difficulties, do not avoid to mention and analyze them is also found in works of other authors. While summarizing performed researches, B. H. Lemme maintains that individuals with expressed internal orientation are inclined to take responsibility in their activities. Their approach to emerging difficulties is different from that of those with expressed external orientation, who are inclined to fatalistic approach to their own work. People with internal locus of control better memorize and analyze own vocational mistakes, failings and learn from them. According to above author, individuals with internal locus of control try to perceive, understand and overcome those difficulties. To the contrary, those with external locus of control fail to perceive the essence of reasons, causing stressful situations and passively surrender to environmental dictate (Lemme, 2003).

Analysis of variables, recorded on the basis of the Passion Scale, adapted for Teaching showed that 31 respondents (54,39%) are obsessed by passion for work, whereas harmonious passion for work is characteristic to 26 respondents (45,61%). It is to be noted that those obsessed by passion for work in the group of teachers were relatively larger in numbers (60%) than those in the group of preschool educators (41%).

We evaluated links between respondents' locus of control and their passion for pedagogical activity/passion for teaching by employing rank correlation coefficient Kendall's tau (τ)-c. This coefficient is a measure of association between two quantities.

The following value in above coefficient was found: tau (τ)-c = - 0, 77, $p < 0,001$. A strong reciprocal link between internality and the character of passion for work was recorded. It means that obsessive passion for teaching is stronger, when internality is expressed poorer. Analogous statistically significant results were discovered in both groups of respondents. In the group of teachers tau (τ)-c = - 0,78; $p < 0,001$, whereas in the group of preschool educators tau (τ)-c = - 0,56; $p < 0,001$.

To find out, whether or not the amount of perceived vocational difficulties is related to peculiarities in passion for work, Mann–Whitney U test was employed. Respondents, belonging to the group of individuals with obsessive passion for teaching were compared to those with harmonious passion for teaching.

Table 2. Comparison of perceived vocational difficulties among groups with different passion for teaching

Variables	Perceived Institutional Difficulties	Perceived Psycho-emotional Difficulties	All Perceived Difficulties
Passion for Teaching (Obsessive or Harmonious)	U = 376,50	U = 303,50	U = 321,50
	p= 0,652	p= 0,061	p= 0,171

Comparison of perceived professional difficulties in respondents' groups with different types of passion for Teaching (see Table 2) showed no statistically significant differences. Those respondents, who harmoniously relate their work with other aspects of life and those, who are focused on uncomfortable aspects of work, perceive their vocational difficulties in a similar way.

In the process of research data were collected about peculiarities of pedagogues' leisure time: a) about personal likings of leisure time; b) about average time, spent for personal likings (hrs/week).

Table 3. Correlations between perceived vocational difficulties and leisure time for personal likings

Variables	Perceived Institutional Difficulties	Perceived Psycho-emotional Difficulties	All Perceived Difficulties
Amount of Leisure Time for Personal Likings (hrs/week)	rho= - 0, 348	rho=-0,210	rho = -0, 280
	p= 0,008	p= 0,118	p= 0, 035

Respondents were asked about five leisure time likings and most of them (85%) pointed to no more than 3 of them. One single respondent maintained that she had no leisure time whatsoever for several years in a row. 23 respondents treated their leisure time as tolerable, another 33 would like it to have it more. Most popular leisure time likings distributed in the following ways: it is mostly TV watching, visiting of theatre and concert halls (30%), another 25% of respondents spare their leisure time to needlework and reading; 23% of them indicated physically active leisure time (travelling, walking and taking fresh air, sports); 20% of them indicated communication with friends and family connections as leisure time likings.

Correlative analysis showed that amount of all perceived vocational difficulties is related to leisure time peculiarities (see Table 3). Statistically significant reverse correlation $\rho = -0,280$, $p < 0,05$ shows that respondents face a smaller amount of vocational difficulties, when they can spare more time for personal likings. Analogous reverse correlation $\rho = -0,348$, $p < 0,01$ shows that those sparing more time for leisure time likings more rarely emphasize difficulties of institutional, organizational, administrative difficulties and those emerging in relations with colleagues, learners and their parents. Statistically significant links between perceived psycho-emotional difficulties and leisure time for personal likings were not traced.

In many researches it was emphasized that subjective approach to one's own health is an important psychological factor, predetermining personal chances to overcome challenges that emerge in vocational activity. In 5-point scale system respondents evaluated their health from 1 as very bad to 5 as very good. That allowed (see Table 4) to distribute them into two groups: A group, in which respondents evaluated

their own health (S) by 3 points (satisfactory) or by a lower point ($S \leq 3$); B group, in which respondents evaluated their own health (S) by 4 points (good) or a higher point ($S \geq 4$).

Table 4. Comparison of perceived vocational difficulties among pedagogues' groups with different evaluation of their own health state

Variables	Perceived Institutional Difficulties	Perceived Psycho-emotional Difficulties	All Perceived Difficulties
Health evaluation	U = 142,00	U = 91,50	U = 116,50
A gr. ($S \leq$ Satisfactory) or B gr. ($S \geq$ Good)	p= 0,085	p= 0,001	p= 0,023

To find a link between subjective evaluation of one's own health and perceived vocational difficulties Mann–Whitney U test was applied for comparison of these groups. It was discovered that pedagogues, evaluating their own health comparatively worse ($S \leq 3$), generally face in their vocational activity with a larger number of vocational difficulties compared to those, who evaluate their health as good or very good ($S \geq 4$) (Mann–Whitney U = 116,50; $p < 0,05$). Compared results showed that this statistically significant tendency is strengthened by statistically significantly higher sensibility to difficulties of psycho-motor character among pedagogues, giving worse evaluation to their own health (Mann–Whitney U = 91,50; $p < 0,001$).

To find out, whether or not there are differences in perceiving vocational difficulties in groups of above teachers and preschool educators, they were compared by employing Mann–Whitney U test.

Table 5. Comparison of perceived vocational difficulties among groups of teachers and preschool educators

Variables	Perceived Institutional Difficulties	Perceived Psycho-emotional Difficulties	All Perceived Difficulties
Teachers or preschool educators	U = 256,00	U = 285,50	U = 387,00
	p= 0,016	p= 0,086	p= 0,060

It was discovered that groups of teachers and preschool educators differ statistically significantly only on the basis of amount within Perceived Institutional Difficulties. Teachers pointed to a relatively larger amount of vocational difficulties, emerging due to organizational, administrative circumstances and contacts with colleagues and learners, whereas preschool educators pointed to a smaller amount of them (see Table 5).

No statistically significant differences were found, when comparing indicators of experienced vocational difficulties among pedagogues of metropolitan areas and townships (see Table 6).

Table 6. Comparison of perceived vocational difficulties among groups of pedagogues in metropolitan areas and townships

Variables	Perceived Institutional Difficulties	Perceived Psycho-emotional Difficulties	All Perceived Difficulties
Klaipėda pedagogues or Rietavas pedagogues	U = 329,50	U = 336,00	U = 348,00
	p= 0,394	p= 0,414	p= 0,603

To find out, whether or not perception of vocational difficulties is related to age, qualifical category, work experience, number of changed workplaces, salaries of respondents non-parametric measurement of statistical dependence (Spearman's rank correlation rho) was applied.

Table 7. Correlations between vocational difficulties and socio-demographic characteristics of pedagogues

Variables	Perceived Institutional Difficulties	Perceived Psycho-emotional Difficulties	All Perceived Difficulties
Age	rho= -0,206	rho =- 0,165	rho = -0,204
	p= 0,125	p= 0,225	p= 0, 127
Qualificational category	rho= -0,131	rho=- 0,143	rho = -0,057
	p= 0,333	p= 0,288	p= 0, 673
Pedagogical experience	rho= -0,264	rho=- 0,195	rho = -0,300
	p= 0,048	p= 0,146	p= 0, 023
Number of changed workplaces	rho= 0,276	rho=- 0,052	rho = 0,278
	p= 0,038	p= 0,701	p= 0, 036
Salary	rho= 0,022	rho=- 0,014	rho = -0,032
	p= 0,871	p= 0,9170	p= 0, 816

It was discovered that pedagogues' age, qualificational category and salaries are not interrelated to perceived difficulties of vocational activity. However, pedagogical experience is related to general amount of perceived vocational difficulties ($\rho = -0,300$, $p < 0,05$) and amount of perceived institutional difficulties ($\rho = -0,264$; $p < 0,05$). Values of coefficient in reverse correlation show that pedagogues with a huge working experience face a smaller number of vocational difficulties. Results of correlative analysis (see Table 7) show that respondents, who changed more workplaces, generally face a larger amount of vocational difficulties ($\rho = 0,278$, $p < 0,05$) and, particularly, with difficulties of institutional type ($\rho = 0,276$, $p < 0,05$).

In the process of interview respondents had to answer: 1) who or what assisted them in negotiation of difficulties, emerging in vocational activity at the beginning of career; 2) who or what assists them presently in doing that.

Analysis of received answers showed that 29 respondents (50%) failed to get direct assistance or find it at the beginning of working practice. 5 respondents noted that even presently they have neither assisting persons, nor other appropriate means.

At the beginning of their career respondents were usually assisted in that by colleagues and their advice (18 cases), self-dependent deepening of knowledge in the essence of specific conflict situation by analysing profession related literature and planning activities (10 cases).

Respondents noted that methods, presently assisting in negotiation of vocational difficulties, have changed due to acquired experience and social – cultural circumstances. Most of them (28 cases) underlined that essential role in above negotiation belongs to competences and vocational skills, acquired on the basis of experience. According to a large number of respondents (21 case), ICT are presently those assistants, who help to negotiate difficulties. Another important factor in above matters is cooperation with colleagues (9 cases). They underlined that possibility to address experts (psychologists, social workers, special pedagogues) also contribute to negotiation of these difficulties (6 cases). Others pointed to lawyers and trade-unions (5 cases).

Conclusions

When giving their evaluation of difficulties at the beginning of their career, pedagogues maintained that they were usually emerging due to lack of practical skills. Among difficulties of that period they also emphasized problems, related to discomplicated relations with senior colleagues and/or administration, a big number of learners in classes and groups.

When pointing to unvarying and steady difficulties of vocational activity both teachers and preschool educators emphasized misunderstandings in cooperation with learners' parents, responsibility for learners, necessity for continuous control of emotions, sustention of patience and tolerance. Lack of motivation for learning and learners' discipline related problems they also attached to the category of unvarying and steady difficulties.

When naming vocational activity related difficulties that they usually face in last 2-3 years, respondents mostly underlined difficulties of psycho-emotional character: manifestation of fatigue, complications in cooperation with learners and their parents. Teachers also emphasized lack of motivation for learning. Preschool educators underlined increasing workload and amount of documentation. According to pedagogues of both groups, recent difficulties are usually emerging due to insufficient attention of parents to problems of their children's education, due to passive reaction to pedagogues' remarks and recommendations. Unpaid overtime, integration of children with special demands, increasing number of children with behavioural disorders, potential danger of drug addiction were also attached by pedagogues to recent difficulties.

One of tasks was to find out, whether or not a subjective reception of experienced vocational difficulties is related to us of control. A statistically significant link between internal locus of control, general amount of perceived vocational difficulties and perceived psycho-emotional difficulties was discovered. It coincides with approach of several authors, who maintain that pedagogues with internal orientation give more responsible evaluation of problems in their own vocational activity, trying to define, specify and perceive them (Хьелл & Зиглер, 1997; Lemme, 2003; Frager & Fadiman, 2002).

It was discovered that 54,39% of respondents experience obsessive passion for teaching, another 45,61% - harmonious passion for teaching. However, no statistically significant differences were traced, when comparing these two groups on the basis of perception of difficulties in vocational activity. Results of our research show that respondents, who harmoniously identify their work with other aspects of their life, perceive vocational difficulties similarly to those colleagues, who are inclined to envisage emotional disharmony between own true-life expectations and work related dealings. R. J. Vallerand and his colleagues in their publications maintain that strategies for negotiation of difficulties depend on passion for work. Reaction of persons with harmonious passion for work to vocational difficulties is slow and rational. Reaction of those with obsessive passion for work is spontaneous and emotional. They make every attempt to overcome these difficulties at any cost (Philippe et al., 2009; Mageau et al., 2011; Rousseau et al., 2008). Above strategies were not evaluated and assessed. Accordingly, we could not compare results of our own and above mentioned researches.

Received results show that amount of perceived vocational difficulties is related to leisure time peculiarities. The more leisure time pedagogues have for their personal likings, the less vocational difficulties they face. Those spending more time for own leisure time likings rarely emphasize institutional difficulties (organizational, administrative, those emerging in relations with colleagues, learners and their parents).

It was found that those evaluating their own health state as satisfactory or bad point to a larger number of vocational difficulties, compared to those, who evaluate their health as good or very good.

Compared to preschool educators, teachers pointed to a larger number of perceived institutional difficulties, emerging due to organizational, administrative circumstances and problems in contacts with colleagues and learners.

It was discovered that those with bigger pedagogical experience face a smaller number of vocational difficulties and they rarely emphasize institutional difficulties. A statistically significant relation between changed workplaces and a number of perceived vocational difficulties was found.

It was found that a large number of respondents (50%) failed to find direct support in problematic situations at the beginning of their career. They also failed to find any kind of assistance. Communication with colleagues, their recommendations, self-dependent deepening into the essence of specific conflict situation, reading literature and planning own activities were things that helped pedagogues to overcome these difficulties at the beginning of their career.

Respondents noted that actual methods, helping to overcome vocational difficulties, have changed due to acquired experience and socio-cultural circumstances. Most of them underlined that essential role in negotiation of these difficulties belonged to competences and skills, acquired on the basis of experience. According to some of respondents, employment of ICT, cooperation with colleagues, possibility to address specialists (psychologists, social workers, special pedagogues, lawyers and trade-unions) also assist in negotiation of emerging difficulties.

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PEDAGOGŲ PROFESINĖS VEIKLOS SUNKUMAI: SĄSAJOS SU KONTROLĖS LOKUSU, AISTRA DARBUI IR SOCIALINIAIS – DEMOGRAFINIAIS VEIKSNIAIS

Jelena Puškorienė, Povilas Žakaitis

S a n t r a u k a

Įvairiose šalyse atliekami tyrimai, patvirtinantys, jog pedagogų darbui būdingos emocinės ir intelektinės perkrovos. Pastaruoju metu skelbiama vis daugiau darbų, analizuojančių perdegimo sindromo raiškos ypatumus pedagogų tarpe. Tačiau didžioji dalis tyrimų skiriama neigiamų pedagoginio darbo pasekmių nagrinėjimui. Nepakankamai išgildintos jas sukeliančios priežastys. Pasigendama tyrimų, kurie padėtų įvertinti tipiškus pedagoginės veiklos sunkumus ir atskleistų kaip juos suvokia patys pedagogai. Svarbu išsiaiškinti ir tai, kokios pedagogų psichologinės savybės bei jų socialinės – demografinės charakteristikos turi įtakos subjektyviems savo darbo sunkumų vertinimams.

Šiame straipsnyje patiekiami dviuose Lietuvos Respublikos miestuose dirbančių pedagogų (n = 57) tyrimo rezultatai. Jo metu buvo empiriškai įvertintos pedagogų profesinės veiklos ypatybės ir jų sąsajos su kontrolės lokusu, aistra darbui ir socialinėmis - demografinėmis charakteristikomis.

Vertindamos karjeros pradžioje buvusius sunkumus pedagogės tvirtino, jog jie dažniausiai kildavo dėl praktinių įgūdžių trūkumo. Tarp šio laikotarpio sunkumų akcentuotos auklėtinių drausmės ir bendravimo su jų tėvais problemos, santykių su vyresniais kolegomis ir/ar administracija komplikacijos, didelis vaikų skaičius klasėse ir grupėse.

Nurodydamos nekintančius pastovius profesinės veiklos sunkumus tiek mokytojos, tiek ikimokyklinio ugdymo pedagogės akcentavo bendradarbiavimo su mokinių tėvais nesklaidumus, atsakomybę už ugdytinius, būtinumą nuolat valdyti savo emocijas, išlaikyti kantrybę bei tolerantiškumą. Mokytojos pastovių sunkumų kategorijai priskyrė mokinių mokymosi motyvacijos stoką, mokinių drausmės problemas.

Įvardindamos tuos profesinės veiklos sunkumus, su kuriais paprastai tenka susidurti per paskutinius 2 – 3 darbo metus, tyrimo dalyvės dažniausiai akcentavo psichoemocinio pobūdžio sunkumus: nuovargio apraiškas, bendravimo su ugdytiniais ir jų tėvais komplikacijas ir pan. Mokytojos tarp dabartinių sunkumų dažniausia minėjo mokinių mokymosi motyvacijos stoką. Ikimokyklinio ugdymo pedagogės akcentavo augantį darbo krūvį, didėjančią privalomas dokumentacijos kiekį. Abiejų grupių pedagogių požiūriu, pastaruoju metu sunkumai paprastai kyla dėl nepakankamo tėvų dėmesio savo vaikų ugdymo nesklaidumams, dėl menko jų reagavimo į pedagogų teikiamas pastabas, patarimus. Pedagogės dabartiniams sunkumams taip pat priskyrė: neapmokamus viršvalandžius, specialią

poreikių vaikų integravimo problemas, vaikų, turinčių elgesio sutrikimų, gausėjimą, narkomanijos ir kitų priklausomybių potencialų pavojų.

Vienas tyrimo uždavinių buvo nustatyti, ar subjektyvus profesinėje veikloje patiriamų sunkumų suvokimas yra susijęs su kontrolės lokuso ypatumais. Nustatytas statistiškai reikšmingas ryšys tarp internalus kontrolės lokuso ir bendro suvoktų profesinių sunkumų kiekio bei suvoktų psichoemocinių sunkumų kiekio. Tai sutampa su kai kurių autorių nustatyta tendencija, kad internalios orientacijos darbuotojai atsakingiau vertina savo profesinės veiklos problemas, stengiasi jas apibrėžti, įsisąmoninti (Хьелл & Зиглер, 1997; Lemme, 2003; Frager & Fadiman, 2002).

Nustatyta, jog 54,39% tiriamųjų pasižymi obsesine, o 45,61% - harmoninga aistra darbui. Tačiau lyginant šias dvi grupes pagal profesinės veiklos sunkumų suvokimo rodiklius statistiškai reikšmingų skirtumų nenustatyta. Mūsų tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad respondentės, kurios savo darbą harmoningai tapatina su kitais savo gyvenimo aspektais, profesinius sunkumus suvokia panašiai kaip ir tos jų kolegės, kurios linkę išvelgti emocinę disharmoniją tarp savo gyvenimiškų lūkesčių ir darbo reikalų. R. J. Vallerand ir jo kolegų publikacijose teigiama, kad nuo aistros darbui skirtumų priklauso sunkumų įveikos strategijos. Pasižymintys harmoninga aistra darbui asmenys, susidūrę su profesiniais sunkumais, į juos reaguoja apgalvotai, racionaliai. Žmonės, pasižymintys obsesine aistra darbui, sunkumus reaguoja spontaniškai, emociškai, stengiasi juos įveikti bet kokia kaina (Philippe et al., 2007; Mageau et al., 2005; Rousseau et al., 2002; Ratelle et al., 2004). Šiame tyrime sunkumų įveikos strategijos nebuvo vertinamos. Todėl savo ir minėtų tyrimų rezultatų šiuo aspektu palyginti tarpusavyje negalėjome.

Gauti rezultatai rodo, kad suvoktų profesinių sunkumų kiekis yra susijęs su laisvalaikio ypatumais. Kuo daugiau laisvalaikio pedagogės gali skirti asmeniniams pomėgiams, tuo mažiau profesinių sunkumų jos nurodo. Daugiau laiko savo laisvalaikio pomėgiams skiriančios pedagogės rečiau akcentuoja institucinius (organizacinius, administracinius, kylančius santykiuose su kolegomis, ugdytiniais ir jų tėvais) sunkumus.

Nustatyta, kad pedagogės, kurios savo sveikatos būklę vertina patenkinamai arba blogiau, nurodo didesnę kiekį profesinių sunkumų lyginat su tomis kolegomis, kurios savo sveikatą vertina gerai arba labai gerai.

Mokytojos lyginat su ikimokyklinių įstaigų auklėtojomis nurodė didesnę kiekį institucinių sunkumų, kylančių dėl organizacinių, administracinių aplinkybių ir kontaktų su kolegomis ir ugdytiniais problemų.

Nustatyta, kad turinčios didesnę darbo stažą pedagogės susiduria su mažesniu bendru suvoktų profesinių sunkumų kiekiu, rečiau akcentuoja institucinius sunkumus. Nustatytas statistiškai reikšmingas ryšys tarp pedagogių pakeistų darbo vietų skaičiaus ir suvokiamų profesinių sunkumų kiekio.

Nustatyta, kad žymi dalis (50%) respondenčių karjeros pradžioje kilus sunkumams tiesioginės pagalbos iš nieko nesusilaukdavo. Kitos respondentės nurodė, kad karjeros pradžioje įveikti sunkumus padėdavo bendravimas su kolegomis, jų patarimai, savarankiškas gilinimasis į konkrečios konfliktinės situacijos esmę skaitant specialybės literatūrą, rengiant veiklos planus.

Tiriamosios pažymėjo, kad dabartiniu metu būdai, padedantys įveikti profesinius sunkumus, pasikeitė ir dėl įgytos patirties, ir dėl socialinių – kultūrinių aplinkybių. Daugiausia respondenčių nurodė, kad esminį vaidmenį sunkumų įveikime atlieka patirties pagrindu įgytos kompetencijos, profesiniai įgūdžiai. Dalies tiriamųjų požiūriu, kylančius sunkumus įveikti padeda IKT (informacinės komunikacinės technologijos), bendradarbiavimas su kolegomis, galimybė kreiptis į specialistus: psichologus, socialinius darbuotojus, specpedagogus, teisininkus ir profsąjungos atstovus.